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AF/PA; EUR/WE (DEBORAH MENNUTI)/P/SP; D/C (MCCOO); EUR/PA
(BERBENA); INR/P; INR/EUC; PM; OSC ISA FOR ILN; NEA; WHITE
HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE; DOC FOR ITA/EUR/FR AND PASS USTR/PA
(ANN LUZZATO); USINCEUR FOR PAO; NATO/PA; MOSCOW/PA; ROME/PA;
BRUSSELS/PA; USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE.

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - SECRETARY RICE TO PARIS
MIDDLE EAST - SHARM EL-SHEIK SUMMIT
ARIS - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#)1. SECRETARY RICE TO PARIS
- [1](#)2. MIDDLE EAST - SHARM EL-SHEIK SUMMIT

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

A LARGE MAJORITY OF TODAY'S FRONT PAGES AND EDITORIALS ARE DEVOTED TO SECRETARY RICE'S VISIT TO PARIS, HER MUCH AWAITED POLICY SPEECH AND HER CONSULTATIONS WITH PRESIDENT CHIRAC AND FM BARNIER. THE CHOICE OF PARIS AS THE VENUE FOR A MAJOR POLICY SPEECH IS SEEN AS A "STRONG SYMBOL" (LE PARISIEN) AND THE OVERALL TONE OF COVERAGE IS UPBEAT. EMPHASIS IS ON "THE NEW CHAPTER" AND "WARMING RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE. MOST COMMENTATORS NOTE THE "CHANGE OF TONE" ADOPTED BY THE BUSH II ADMINISTRATION, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL POINT OUT THAT THE CONTENT REMAINS THE SAME: "SECRETARY RICE SEES HERSELF AS THE MISSIONARY OF DEMOCRACY" (LIBERATION). IRAN IS OFTEN SINGLED OUT AS THE NEXT POINT OF CONTENTION BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND THE EUROPEANS, ALTHOUGH "SECRETARY RICE EXCLUDED, FOR THE TIME BEING, THE IDEA OF AN ARMED CONFLICT." IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO, A COLUMN BY STRATEGY ANALYST FRANCOIS GERE WARNS: "ONE OF WASHINGTON'S GREAT MISTAKES WAS TO INCLUDE IRAN IN THE AXIS OF EVIL. IF AN ACT OF AGGRESSION AGAINST IRAN WERE TO HAPPEN, EVEN A LIMITED ONE, THE COST INDUCED BY IRAN'S REACTION COULD BE VERY HIGH." (SEE PART C)

A SAMPLE OF TODAY'S HEADLINES AND TITLES FOLLOWS:

"CONDI RICE WANTS TO OPEN A NEW ERA WITH EUROPE" (LE FIGARO)
"BUSH IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT" HEADLINES LIBERATION OVER A SMILING CONDOLEEZZA RICE.
"MUST WE TRUST RICE?" ASKS POPULAR FRANCE SOIR, WHICH PORTRAYS SECRETARY RICE ON ITS FRONT PAGE ALONGSIDE A CAPTION WHICH

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READS: "THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL WOMAN."

LAST EVENING'S 8PM BROADCASTS GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH: LOIK BERROU ON TF 1: "IT IS DEFINITELY A

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SPECTACULAR WARMING BETWEEN THE U.S. AND FRANCE. RICE IS TRULY IN A CHARM OFFENSIVE MODE." A FEELING ECHOED BY DAVID POIJADAS ON FRANCE 2: "TODAY THERE IS INDEED MUCH DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY GOING ON. WE ARE WITNESSING A NEW CHAPTER IN FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND A WARMING."

THE SECOND MAJOR FRONT-PAGE STORY IS THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN SHARM-EL-SHEIK BETWEEN SHARON AND ABBAS. FOR LE FIGARO IT IS "A FIRST GESTURE TOWARDS PEACE"; FOR LA CROIX IT IS "A PROMISE OF PEACE." (SEE PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

SECRETARY RICE TO PARIS

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"REBUILDING A RELATIONSHIP"

MICHEL SCHIFRES IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (02/09): "FOR ONCE WE WILL ALL APPLAUD THE STAGING. SECRETARY RICE'S RECONCILIATION SHOW IS MOST WELCOME. THE FACT THAT FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS ARE 'MAKING A NEW START' AS FM BARNIER SAID CAN ONLY BE MUSIC TO EVERYONE'S EARS. ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN END TO MURDEROUS LITTLE PHRASES. BOTH SIDES NEEDED TO BEND A LITTLE TO END A QUARREL THAT COULD ONLY BRING UNPLEASANTNESS. TIMES HAVE INDEED CHANGED: SECRETARY RICE NO LONGER BELIEVES IN 'PUNISHING FRANCE.' BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE SHE SEES ONLY 'A SHARED FUTURE.' WORKING TOGETHER TO RE-ENFORCE TRANSATLANTIC TIES, OPENING A NEW CHAPTER IN THE EURO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE ARE TODAY'S AGENDA. THE CHANGE IS REAL AND THE PROGRESS SO MAJOR THAT THE WARMING OF RELATIONS APPEARS TO BE A PRIORITY FOR THE SECOND BUSH ADMINISTRATION. JUST AS PRESIDENT BUSH NEEDED NO ONE TO GO TO WAR, HE NEEDS HIS ALLIES TO ACHIEVE PEACE. BUT HE HAS IN NO WAY DECIDED TO AMEND HIS POLICY. THERE WAS IN HIS INAUGURAL SPEECH AND IN

SECRETARY RICE'S POLICY REMARKS THAT SAME MESSIANIC APPROACH.

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THE BEST POSSIBLE EXAMPLE OF RENEWED TRANSATLANTIC TIES WOULD BE IF IN THE MIDDLE EAST BOTH THE U.S. AND EUROPE WERE TO WEIGH IN WITH THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL ALLIES TO ACHIEVE PEACE. MORE THAN A SPEECH, THIS WOULD REBUILD A RELATIONSHIP."

"MUSICAL SCALES"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (02/09): "CONDI RICE, THE NOTED CONCERT ARTIST, PERFORMED HER EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC GALA WITHOUT A SINGLE FALSE NOTE. FROM 'A NEW CHAPTER' TO AMERICA'S DESIRE OF 'A STRONG EUROPE,' SHE PLAYED ALL THE SCALES. BUT AS THEY SAY IN AMERICA, 'SHE TALKS THE TALK, BUT WILL SHE WALK THE WALK?' THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HER BOSS, PRESIDENT BUSH, HAS SET AS HIS SECOND TERM'S PRIORITY THE NEED TO REPAIR THE DIPLOMATIC CHINA HE BROKE DURING HIS FIRST TERM. NEVERTHELESS, WE CAN WONDER WHETHER HE HAS REALLY CONVERTED TO MULTILATERALISM AND DIALOGUE, OR IF INSTEAD HE HAS JUST MADE A TACTICAL ADJUSTMENT BORN OUT OF HIS DIFFICULTIES IN IRAQ. THE QUALITY OF 'THE NEW CHAPTER' ANNOUNCED BY SECRETARY RICE WILL BE TESTED BY U.S. ACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ELSEWHERE, IRAN, KYOTO, CHINA, WHERE EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS DIFFER. WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT IF SECRETARY RICE TOOK, IN PARIS, THE APPEARANCE OF A DOVE, SHE

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ALSO KNOWS HOW TO FLY AMONG THE HAWKS."

"IN THE NAME OF RECONCILIATION?"

THOMAS DE ROCHECHOUART IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR (02/09): "THE TENSION BORN FROM THE WAR IN IRAQ AND THE BOEING-AIRBUS CONFRONTATION HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN. THE SINGLE WORD SECRETARY RICE LIKES TO REPEAT IS 'RECONCILIATION.' THE DETERIORATION IN IRAQ SEEMS TO HAVE CONVINCED WASHINGTON THAT THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE POWER CANNOT DO WITHOUT ITS ALLIES. PRESIDENT BUSH'S DESIRE TO ACHIEVE A DEMOCRATIC GREATER MIDDLE EAST SEEMS STRONGER THAN EVER. THIS CANNOT BE DONE WITHOUT EUROPE'S, AND THEREFORE FRANCE'S SUPPORT. AND SO WE WONDER: IS SECRETARY RICE'S VISIT A TRUE REUNION OR A FALSE

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RECONCILIATION? ONE THING IS CERTAIN, THIS VISIT HAS HELPED TO LESSEN THE TENSION."

"DECIDEDLY, A NEW BUSH"

BERNARD GUETTA ON GOVERNMENT-RUN FRANCE INTER RADIO (02/09): "AMERICA IS NOT PREPARING NEW MILITARY INTERVENTIONS. SECRETARY RICE COULD NOT HAVE SAID IT BETTER. AS SHE TOLD A

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ROOMFUL OF FRENCH DIGNITARIES THAT THERE WILL BE MORE SOBRIETY, LESS IMPATIENCE AND MORE REALISM IN AMERICA'S DESIRE TO FAVOR A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN THE ARAB-MUSLIM WORLD, VERY APTLY DEFINED AS A CONDITION FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD. IN HER SPEECH THERE WAS MUCH ABOUT DIALOGUE, AND PUTTING MINDS TOGETHER. AND NO LONGER TALK OF OLD AND NEW EUROPE. THERE WAS MUCH ABOUT PARTNERSHIP: AMERICA NEEDS EUROPE. EVEN PRESIDENT BUSH HAS UNDERSTOOD THIS MUCH, AND IT IS JUST AS WELL."

"THE SIDE OF FREEDOM"

JOSEPH LIMAGNE IN REGIONAL OUEST FRANCE (02/09): "THE TIME OF PAST QUARRELS IS OVER! THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE AND EUROPE BELONG TO THE SAME SIDE OF LIBERTY WHERE THE WIND PUSHES THEM TO WALK IN THE SAME DIRECTION. THIS IS WHAT CONDOLEEZZA RICE CAME TO SAY YESTERDAY IN PARIS. JACQUES CHIRAC SURELY APPRECIATED THE TONE. FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE, RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE 'MUCH BETTER IN PRACTICE THAN IN THEORY.'"

"TURNING THE PAGE"

JULES CLAUWAERT IN REGIONAL NORD LAIR (02/09): "THE YOUNG AMERICA JUST REMINDED OLD EUROPE, TEMPTED TO FORGET ITS PAST AND ITS DUTIES, THAT THE FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AND OF PEOPLES IS NEVER FINISHED. IT WAS WON BY THE WEST, AT THE END OF THE COLD WAR, BECAUSE CITIZENS TOOK THE LEAD IN THE REVOLT - IN GDANSK, IN BERLIN, AND ELSEWHERE. THE MESSAGE FROM AMERICA IS CLEAR. IF THERE HAVE BEEN DIFFERENCES OVER IRAQ BETWEEN THE U.S. AND WHAT GEORGE W. BUSH NOW CALLS 'OUR EUROPEAN FRIENDS,' IT IS NECESSARY TO FORGET THEM QUICKLY AND TO TURN THE PAGE."

"THE SAME POLICY, BUT WITH INTELLIGENCE"

JEAN-CLAUDE KIEFER IN REGIONAL LES DERNIERES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE (02/09): "SECRETARY RICE COULD NOT HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER DAY TO RENEW RELATIONS WITH EUROPE. THE SHARM-EL SHEIKH SUMMIT CONFIRMS AMERICAN DIPLOMACY. EVEN THE MOST RELUCTANT (OF AMERICA'S ALLIES) WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO REFUSE (FURTHER ALLIANCE) AT THE RISK OF BEING MARGINALIZED. FOR PARIS, WHICH HARBORS SOME GEO-POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS, TO BE SO ISOLATED WOULD BE A NIGHTMARE. A SIGN OF THE TIMES: FRANCE WILL HOST THIS THURSDAY IN NICE A MEETING OF NATO DEFENSE MINISTERS. THIS IS A FIRST SINCE PARIS LEFT NATO'S INTEGRATED MILITARY COMMAND IN 1966."

MIDDLE EAST - SHARM EL-SHEIK SUMMIT

"A MATTER OF TRUST"

BRUNO FRAPPAT IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (02/09): "FOR A TIME NOW ISRAEL HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF GOODWILL. PALESTINE HAS ALSO ENGAGED IN A REVISION OF ITS POSITION. WE HAVE PROBABLY ENTERED THAT INTERMEDIARY PHASE IN WHICH MISTRUST IS ON THE WANE AND TRUST IS NOT YET VERY STRONG. IN MILITARY LANGUAGE THIS TRANSLATES IN A `CEASE-FIRE;' IN POLITICAL LANGUAGE IT MEANS GOING BACK TO DIALOGUE; DOMESTICALLY, FOR EACH PEOPLE, IT MEANS REMAINING WATCHFUL WITH REGARD TO EXTREMISTS AND THEIR AMBITION TO SABOTAGE PEACE. NO ONE OTHER THAN FANATICS WANTS TO SEE BLOOD BEING SHED IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE SPONSORS OF THE FORMER OSLO PROCESS AND OF THE `ROADMAP,' REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POWERS, EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY." LEACH